

For Agent Oswald

The CIA had no problem not giving the Warren Commission anything the CIA did not want to give. Not even after the Commission knew what it wanted, or thought it did.

After it knew what it could have wanted, anyway.

Only the CIA's certain knowledge that the Commission did not intend a full investigation, did not want to risk having its preconceptions ruined, made this possible. The Commission had unlimited authority. Only it never once used it.

Yuri Ivanovich Nosenko, a top KGB American expert in Moscow headquarters duringz@sw when JFK was assassinated, walked into American offices in Switzerland in February 1964 and defected. He was immediately flown to Fairfax County, Virginia, where the CIA is headquartered. Of course the CIA questioned him extensively. It also had to and did make him available to the FBI, which did its own questioning.

There is nothing Nosenko knew that the Russian's back in Moscow didn't know. Their only doubts, once they knew he defected, is how much he remembered to spill.

That Nosenko had defected was not secret from the Russians.

What he knew and told the American agencies also involved no secrets that had to be held from the Russians.

But it was all kept secret from the American people.

So little was known about Nosenko's role in the investigation that the FBI didn't even bother to classify some of its reports. The highest classification on any report I was able to obtain was the "Confidential." However, when the Commission staff went over the part of what Nosenko said that the spooks elected to let it have the unclassified suddenly became "TOP SECRET." And all were suppressed for more than a decade after the Report was issued.

The spoks and the Commission shared a common problem presented by Nosenko's defection with all that Oswald knowledge. All the KGB's papers and information passed through Nosenko's hands and mind once ^{the} JFK was assassinated. It was still fresh in his mind when he defected less than three months later.

His defection was less than a month after the Commission could not longer, even in strictest secrecy, ignore reports that Oswald had served the CIA, FBI or both. The problem these reports gave the Commission was how to avoid and do nothing about them, as a series of formerly TOP SECRET transcripts of its executive sessions for the last third of January proved. I got them ~~xxxxx~~ after almost a decade of effort and through litigation. (Fnote to WWIV)

As the Commission, having decided on a lone alienated "red" nut assassin - and no conspiracy above all - found the truth incompatible, so also did the agencies have to avoid any suggestions of any Oswald association.

Because, as even Commissioner Dulles admitted to his colleagues, there was little likelihood the FBI sent Oswald to Russia, the FBI did give the Commission reports of its interviews with Nosenko as they related to Oswald. Scores of pages the Commission then classified so highly the law required them to hold information that could have led to an international conflagration, serious war.

There were enormous voids in what the FBI reported, as the most casual reading of the Nosenko reports discloses. Nonetheless, for a Commission seeking information, even these limited representations of what the Russians did, knew and felt about Oswald were rich.

For a Commission determined to investigate fully and anxious to know whether its sole candidate for assassin had led a complicated life - whether there could have been any executive-agency involvement in the assassination of the President - Nosenko was an evidentiary goldmine.

Perhaps the most important fact he reported - and mind you, he hated the Russians enough to defect - is that the Russians regarded Oswald as a "sleeper agent!"

This means one spirited into a country to just live there and await an assignment that might not come for years.

The Russians didn't trust Oswald. And Oswald was anti-Soviet, as the Commission also knew. Anti-American Communist, too. And there were these reports Oswald had been CIA, FBI or both. Then Nosenko came in out of the Russian cold. All known before the Commission began what anyone could call any real work.

For a real investigation Nosenko's timing of his defection could not have been more perfectly timed.

For this Commission he was a disaster.

He said what it didn't want said or known - what destroyed its basic conclusions reached before it did any work. (It never did any real investigating.)

Had this Commission not been able to work in complete secrecy what followed would have been completely impossible.

What followed is that in all it published - that massive, 900-page "report and an appended estimated 10,000,000 of supposed evidence - there is no mention of Nosenko and his priceless intelligence!

Some of it finally leaked out in a CIA public-relations job, a book titled KGB. This was almost a decade late and then, despite the considerable sale of the book in hardback and in condensation and in reprint - multimillions - the passages relating to Oswald went unreported in the press.

Several years after that the dribbling of documents began.

One of these, originally kept secret from me after I began to get copies of all, supposedly, is a memo written for the record by W. David Slawson, assistant counsel. He and the first black Ford later appointed to his cabinet, at just about the time the leaking began, William T. Coleman, handled this part of the work and were the Nosenko experts.

The two of them, Rankin, Howard P. Willens, Samuel A. Stern and Burt Griffin, met with then chief dirty-worker as chief of clandestine services, Richard Helms, Raymond Rocca, who was forced out during the Watergate scandals, and a man whose name was masked, a name ~~xxxx~~ of 11 letters. Rocca was the CIA's Oswald expert for the Commission. He was also next to James Angleton, whose domestic dirty ~~xxxx~~

workings forced him out in the Nixon scandals. Theirs was the Counterintelligence ~~xxx~~ arm. And despite Helms' solemn assurances when he began Director, Central Intelligence, they did target on Americans inside the United States.

At 11 a.m. March 12, 1964 - which was after the FBI had given the Commission those scores of its Nosenko papers - there was this conference "on how best the CIA and the Commission could work together" to meet the committee's obligations. The conference was to cover all the Commission's work.

In the words of Slawson's report, "The first topic of conversation was Yuri Nosenko, the recent Soviet defector. A general discussion was held on this problem [sic], the with CIA's recommendation being that the Commission await further developments."

So far as the Commission was concerned, there never were any "further developments." It never got a word from the CIA on what it got from Nosenko!

The CIA drained the guy. He wanted to be drained of every word the CIA wanted, too. As an experienced intelligence man he knew his greatest danger was in trying to play games with those upon whom his life and future depended. Once he made his decision he had no choice and he had the knowledge and training that told him this. He also hated the Russians, the reason for his turning himself in to American intelligence. His need was complete cooperation. He knew his need and he pursued it.

Hoover, master bureaucrat of them all and himself endangered by reports Oswald had been his fink, played the game the opposite way from the CIA. The CIA stone-walled. Hoover killed the Commission with unsolicited kindness. In doing this he made an exculpatory record, one that could be invoked later to show how completely cooperative he personally and the FBI were. If the last thing Hoover wanted was any investigation of a y connection he had with Oswald, the written record is made to appear that he held nothing back.

So, on March 6, 1964, when he forwarded the last of the FBI's thousands of words of its Nosenko interviews to Rankin, Hoover made a personal record of what is not in these often repetitious FBI reports.

Nosenko, Hoover wrote, "is willing to testify before the President's Commission." (Hoover concluded with another of his masterful bureaucratic touches. It had as its purposes, as did his personal conveying of Nosenko's offer to testify, making a record to clear Hoover and pinion the Commission and the CIA. It made a false record of Hoover's cooperativeness, too, of seeming to hold nothing back.)

"IN the event you desire to have Nosenko appear before the Commission, it is suggested that you make arrangements with the Central Intelligence Agency, which has custody of Nosenko."

Hoover didn't have to tell the Commission. It knew. The FBI reports do not give the exact place at which Nosenko was made available to it but they all say "Fairfax County, Virginia," which is where the CIA is headquartered. In saying the unnecessary Hoover was not being kind and considerate. He was adding to the record left for the future that he had no control over Nosenko, the CIA did, and if the Commission elected not to hear a word from Nosenko, a safe assumption, it was not because Hoover didn't tell them how to get the information Nosenko had.

So, what Hoover wanted the Commission to know about what Nosenko said about
Oswald he saw to it the Commission did know. (Later count pages and insert here,

pages, none of which point a finger at Hoover or the FBI.

Virtually all of it gave the Commission the most serious troubles and pressures that helped Hoover and his own interest in a non-investigation.

The essence pointed at the CIA, the agency with agents planted in Russia. The Russians feared Oswald was a "sleeper agent" of the CIA. They kept him under close surveillance, intercepting even all his mail while he was in Minsk. He was also under physical surveillance.

(Follow with details. Include Slawson/Coleman 6/24 memo. Heavy on their undated 111pp plus to-be-ridiculed appendix, "Uswald's Foreign Activities, W with suppressions from notes. Include Arch corres on withholding, leaks to CBS-Schorr. Schorr's misuse end June 75 to repeat lone assassin theory again, turned on by antoCastros to make it look like ^{then} astroite, etc. Relate declassifications to current investigations.

Go back to this memo of which I was given first page only for more ridicule. These Commission types actually tried to cajole or bribe the CIA with offers of what it knew would be worthless and what it knew it would get anyway, offers of the testimony taken from Marina, Marguerite, Robert, etc. This was all worthless, to anyone, especially the CIA. They went farthur and pretended that they didngt let any of the testomony out but they ofiered transcripts for the CIA to examine in ~~its~~ Commission offices. Actually, they let witnesses buy transcripts from the court reporter. Instead of ~~xxli~~ chaking the CIA up and down, as it could and should have, the Commission whined and pretended to offer goodies. It was all worhtless and it told the CIA all it needed to know. Thus also the CIS gave the Commission nothing.